

Office of Congressman Charles W. Dent
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Congressman Dent and colleagues tour facilities central to preventing WMD attacks in the U.S.

MERCURY, NV — U.S. Rep. Charlie Dent (PA-15) this week joined a Congressional delegation to the Department of Homeland Security's Radiological/Nuclear Countermeasures Test and Evaluation Complex (Rad/NucCTEC) in the vast, barren deserts of Nevada.

Congressman Dent observed and operated nuclear and radiological countermeasures testing, including detections designed to identify vehicles transporting nuclear explosive devices, fissile or radiological materials intended for illicit use.

The testing and evaluation complex helps homeland security officials develop state-of-the-art detections systems at ports of entry, toll plazas, entrances to tunnels and bridges, and land borders.

The Congressman was joined by fellow members of the House Homeland Security Committee Subcommittee on Prevention of Nuclear and Biological Attack. Other participating members were Reps. John Linder (R-GA), Jim Langevin (D-RI) and Jim Gibbons (R-NV).

"Of all the concerns we have for our nation's security, the most serious is the threat of nuclear or biological attack," Dent said. "I wanted to take the opportunity to see this front of the War on Terror – our preparedness and response to radiological or nuclear attack here in the United States."

The Congressional delegation also visited the National Center for Combating Terrorism and the Department of Energy's Device Assembly Facility (DAF). At the DAF, Congressman Dent witnessed the extraordinary security measures used to protect our nation's weapons-grade nuclear material. Before 1992, DAF was used for assembling nuclear devices prior to placing them underground for weapons testing. Now it serves as a criticality-experiments facility, working closely with Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

The aim of the National Center for Combating Terrorism (NCCT) is to provide a comprehensive, fully integrated system of facilities and capabilities to meet a wide range of counter-terrorism requirements. Users of the NCCT T-1 facility conduct training and exercises in a variety of complex scenarios, and test new technologies in realistic conditions with the personnel who will use them during actual events.

There, Congressman Dent met with members of the Palmer Township, Northampton County Municipal Fire Department, who were on site for WMD radiological/nuclear training for HazMat technicians. The Congressman spent time with Palmer Township volunteer firefighters Bill Andress, Joseph Kearney and Terence McConlogue.

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